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REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3 and 6-14 are pending; Claims 9 and 10 were previously withdrawn from consideration. No claims are newly added, canceled, or amended herewith.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-3, 6-8, and 11-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over McGuire et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,254,965, hereafter McGuire) in view of the Akahori et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,310,587, hereafter Akahori) and Asahi (JP 404154579A). For the reasons discussed below, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 relates to a kitchen sheet including a base sheet made of a fiber aggregate, the base sheet having a plurality of convex portions giving the kitchen sheet an apparent thickness of 1.0 mm or greater and a compressive recovery of 30% or more. As described in the specification, if the apparent thickness of the kitchen sheet is smaller than 1.0 mm, the passage ways for water vapor formed of concavities connecting with each other are narrow, and the drops of condensation on the kitchen sheet, into direct contact with food.¹

As set forth in MPEP § 2143.01, "the mere fact that references can be combined or modified does not render the resultant combination obvious unless the prior art also suggests the desirability of the combination." (emphasis in original). In re Mills, 916 F.2d 680, 16 U.S.P.Q.2d 1430 (Fed. Cir. 1990). Additionally, "the level of skill in the art cannot be relied upon to provide the suggestion to combine references."

In the outstanding Office Action, the motivation to combine McGuire, Akahori, and Asahi is not found within the teachings of any of the references. In fact, Applicants

¹ Specification, page 13, lines 10-15.